

b.) Remarks

Claim 1 has been amended in order to recite the present invention with the specificity required by statute. Claims 16 and 17 are cancelled as superfluous and claims 18, 22, 23, 56 and 57 are amended to maintain their dependency. Additionally, new claim 72 is presented in order to more specifically recite a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The subject matter of the amendment may be found in the Examples of the specification as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

Claims 1, 2, 12-20 and 22-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to enable one of ordinary skill to make and use the claimed invention. In support of the rejection, the Examiner contends Applicants' methods for inducing differentiation of embryonic stem cells into ectodermal cells require co-culture of OP9, PA6 or NIH3T3. This is the sole remaining rejection.

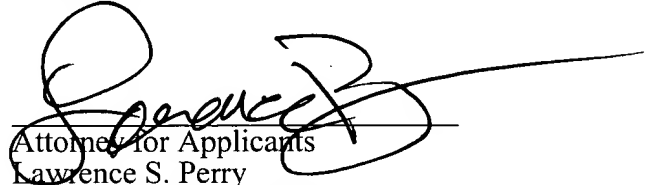
In response, while Applicants acknowledge that those are their preferred co-culture materials, claim 1 has been amended to recite that culturing is carried out in the presence of a stroma cell or a stroma cell-derived factor. In this regard, as taught at specification page 38, lines 10-11 et seq., those of ordinary skill readily appreciate that the present invention requires only culturing in the presence of a stroma cell or a stroma cell-derived factor and can ascertain such cells and factors without undue experimentation based on the detailed disclosure noted by the Examiner.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all of the Examiner's concerns are now overcome and the claims are now in allowable condition. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application is earnestly solicited.

Claims 1-2, 12-15, 18-24, 26-27, 56-57 and 72 remain presented for continued prosecution.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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